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ROBINSON: U.S. intelligence sources say for the first time in more than 10 years, the Soviet Union has sent one of its cruise missile carrying submarines to waters off America's Eastern seaboard. Analysts say the boat appears to be heading for Cuba, and that could create some difficult political problems for the president. Here's Pentagon correspondent, John McWethy.

MCWETHY: The submarine is of the Echo II class. It is nuclear powered and can carry cruise missiles with both conventional and nuclear warheads. The range of the missile, the SSN-12, is about 300 miles. It is designed for use against ships at sea, but could be used against targets on land as well, although with very poor accuracy. American analysts are paying special attention to this submarine, not because it poses any immediate threat, but because it may be part of a political message from the Kremlin. When the U.S. and NATO began deploying Pershing and Cruise nuclear missiles in Western Europe this month, Soviet leaders promised in some way to increase the threat to the U.S. in retaliation. The Echo II may be a first step. Officials say if the submarine, which is now off the Eastern seaboard, makes port in Cuba, it could become a difficult political issue for the Reagan administration. In the late 1960s, the Soviet Union agreed to keep its strategic missile submarines, with their long-range missiles, away from Cuba. The Echo II, however, with its short-range missiles, continued to come and go for several years. And the U.S. did not protest. Then, 10 years ago, the Soviets stopped sending this type of submarine. Now, after a decade, they appear to have changed their minds again, perhaps for political effect. Some American officials say the president would be wise to ignore the submarine altogether. But admitted in the current climate, that might be difficult. At the very least, the Navy plans to shadow the submarine every mile of its journey toward Cuba. But further decisions on how to deal with this latest Soviet move will have to come from the president. John McWethy, ABC News, the Pentagon.